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Possible Interview Questions for Wholesale Buyers/Grocery Stores

1. Current Practices

- Do you currently purchase local F&V?
- Do you have any experience working directly or indirectly with local farmers?
- Do you measure the volume of locally grown products that you purchase? If so, what percentage of your fruit and vegetables are purchased locally?
- What is the extent of the commitment to buy local currently?
- Do you have a goal or a plan to increase CT grown products?
- How do you define local? Within what distance do you consider local?

2. Purchasing Local Products

- What works with your current purchasing system? What are the challenges that you face purchasing local produce and vegetables? What problems do you face buying local?
- Are there barriers to purchasing more locally grown products?
- Have you had to change/adjust any processes in order to accommodate purchasing local? (Receiving, accounts payable, billing, etc.)
- How do staff perceive locally grown? What is the prevailing attitude/culture toward locally grown?
- When deciding to purchase local products do you take any of the following into consideration:
 - Size
 - Price
 - Packaging
 - Time
 - Reliability
- What kind of service do you expect from local growers?

3. The Market for local F&V

- Do you have a sense of what your customers are looking for?
- Are you seeing a trend toward local? Has your grocery store identified local as an emerging/developed market?
- What is the demand for local?
- How do you measure market pressures today?
- What assumptions do you make when you buy local? What are customer assumptions when they buy local?
- Do you believe that customers will pay a premium for CT Grown? Do you have any data to support higher prices for CT Grown? What will customers pay for locally grown? Will customers pay more for locally grown or only purchase locally grown if it is the same price?

4. Processes and approvals

- Would or do you require GAP certification or other food safety certification programs?
- Do you think of local growers as producing safer products than large national growers?
- What is your process for receiving products? Where, how, when and how frequently do farmers drop off product?
- Would you require any kind of processing?
- What standards would you have for grading F&V?
- What kind of packaging would work for your store?
- How would you handle pricing of local F&V?
- Do you deal directly with growers or through distributors?
- Would you be willing to deal directly with farmers?
- Could your individual stores work with individual farmers? What would the process be like?

5. Ethnic Produce

- How much do you customize your produce line?
- Does the produce you carry reflect any ethnic populations in your community?
- Do you perceive an increased demand for ethnic produce?
- Could ethnic produce be a niche market for local farmers?
- How much could you customize your produce line?

6. Marketing local F&V

- Do you market CT grown F&V? If so, how? What are you currently (if anything) doing now to promote or sell local? Do you have a strategy or plan for promoting local?
- Is there an opportunity for local growers to use CT Grown and/or GAP status to promote their products?
- Do you market to specific demographic segments of your customer base for purchases of locally grown?
- What resources have you dedicated to promoting local products?